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THE FALLACY OF ATHEISM

- A LECTURE -

DELIVERED BY

PROFESSOR WM. SEYMOUR

PHRENOLOGIST AND PSYCHOLOGIST

- - - IN - - -

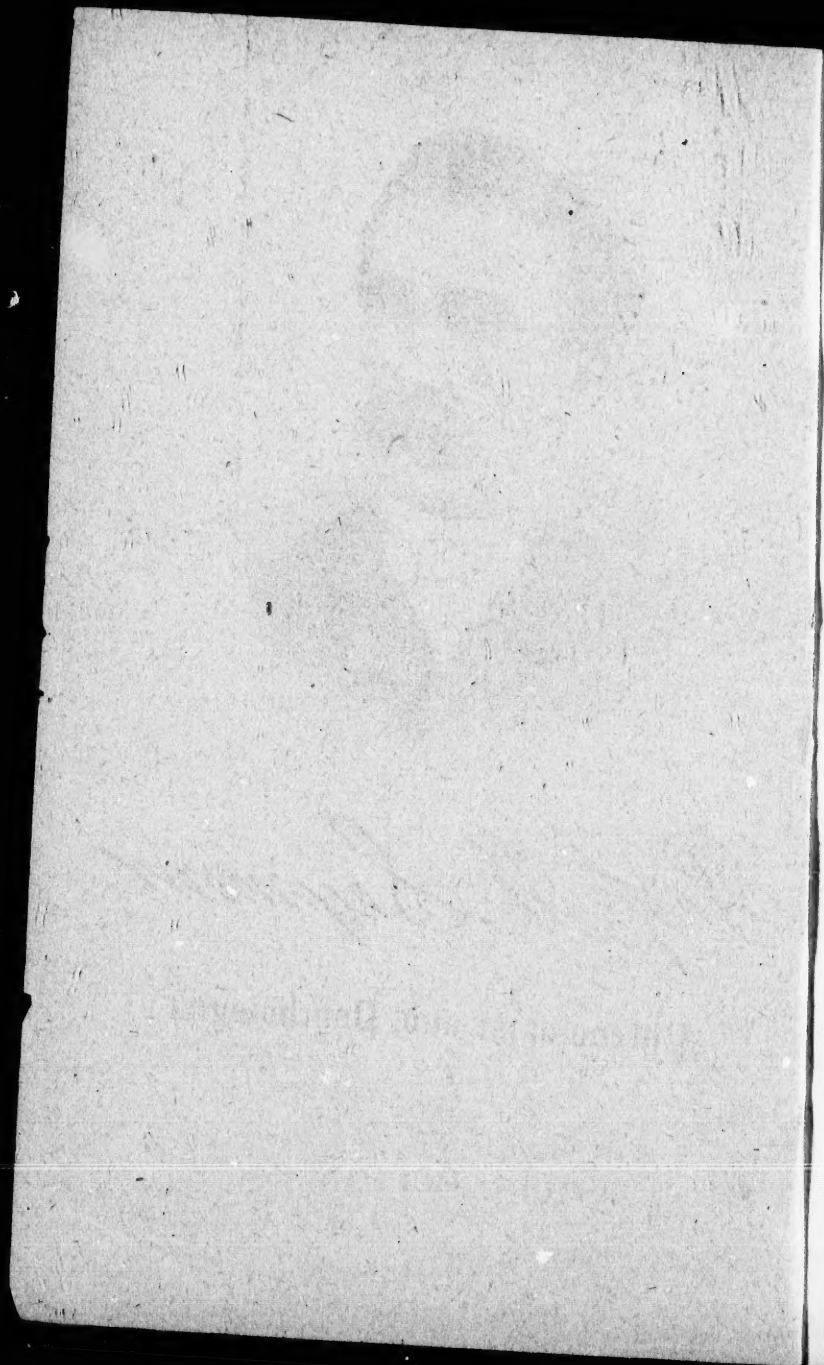
SHAFTESBURY HALL

TORONTO, ONT.

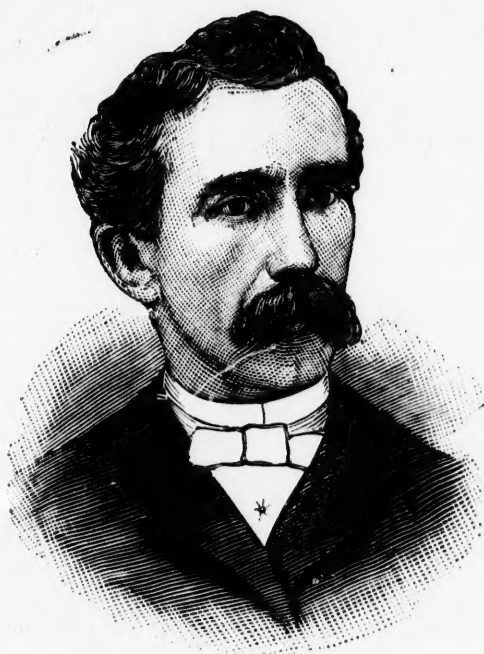
November 22nd, 1888.

REPORTED VERBATIM AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF
HIS AUDIENCE.

PRICE FIFTEEN CENTS.



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Prof. Wm. Seymour

Phrenologist and Psychologist

—OF—

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THE FALLACY OF ATHEISM

BY J. I. MURPHY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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INTRODUCTORY.

Mr. President and Friends :

The question will undoubtedly be asked by many persons "Why a Phrenologist and Psychologist should adopt the subject of this evening for a discourse"; there are several reasons I might assign, but chief among them is this one: that since I have been in Toronto there has been many conflicting reports in circulation as to my religious belief; some have determined me to be an Athiest, others a Diest, some a Spiritualist, and others a Christian. Hence in order that I may set myself aright before you, and settle the question in your minds as to what I believe or disbelieve, I have chosen this subject this evening.

In justice to the honesty of those who have circulated these reports, I might state, they have not been solely without foundation, for I have been for years connected with what is known as the Liberal League or Free-thinkers' Association, and was president of one of the leading Societies, and in my investigations (while associated with these people), I had reached the borders of Atheism, and was about to plunge into its dark abyss, by opening a discussion in the City of Philadelphia denying "That the Universe demonstarated the exis-

tence of a God." In preparing for the discussion I studied the probable objections that might be brought against me, and in doing so I concluded that the objections (in favor of the existence of a God) were stronger, and more numerous than what I could say against it; hence from that time I have been constantly growing stronger in the Faith, not only in the existence of a God, but of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, the efficacy of prayer and all the fundamental principles of Christianity.

And now as the basis of my discourse proper I would introduce three or four principles which Atheists deny.

The First is—The existence of God.

Second—His Creative Energy.

Third —The divine Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Fourth—The Efficacy of Prayer.

In attempting to prove the existence of God, one of the strongest oppositions that we may have to contend against from the Atheistic standpoint is, the disposition to believe nothing that cannot be demonstrated to their external senses. Hence, with great boldness, and with an air of triumph, the Atheist demand of the believer a practical demonstration of "what God is, where He dwells, what He looks like, what is His size, color form, etc.: white or black, great or small;" and if such questions are unanswerable by the finite mind, then there is no evidence of His existence, and hence they will not believe; but in the practical demonstration of the

existence of God (at least to the consciousness of our senses), through the exercise of Reason, I ask but a single concession, namely—that there is a connection between cause and effect, that every effect must have an adequate cause; this I presume will be readily granted as it is a self-evident truth. We know by intuition that nothing occurs within us, and by observation, so far as we can comprehend the operations of nature that nothing transpires around us without a cause; all the activities of mind changes in nature and movements in society are but constantly recurring effects of adequate causes. If the connection between cause and effect be conceded, our next position will be, that the cause must surpass or at least equal the effect in excellence; no quality, power or property can reside in the effect superior to the single or combined properties of the cause. If this be not so, then something may manifest itself in the effect without a cause, which we have determined impossible. This position being true, though the qualities of existing things in the Universe do not prove that the great "First Cause" possesses every possible perfection; yet they do demonstrate that He is equal or superior to the sum of excellencies and greatnesses known to exist in all the grandeur, majesty and throughout the compass of the Universe. His pre-existence must antedate the first object of creation, which we conceive stamps Him with Eternity. His power must equal the combined forces of nature as demonstrated in both the elements of "Mind and

Matter," His Majesty and the glory of His excellence must equal the grandeur of the heavens and earth combined; His wisdom and intelligence must equal the aggregation of intelligence possessed by mankind and other intellectual beings. This method of argumentation proves to us the existence of a Being equal to the God spoken in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. But in answer to the question "Show us God" we would invite attention to the nature, attributes and demonstrations of our own existence, and here we may find a comparison to the lesson taught by Jesus to His disciples in answer to their inquiry "Show us the Father." "He that has seen Me hath seen the Father." So we affirm that a careful study of our own existence (as a microcosm of the universe,) and in our relation to the objective world around us, will prove to every rational mind, the existence of what we term the Infinite. We are told in the 1st chapter of the Book of Genesis that "God made man in His own image," this cannot refer to the form, likeness or size of man's physical body, but rather to the attributes and powers of his mind, hence in the manifestation of the intellectual and spiritual elements and conditions of man's existence (so far as the finite can represent the Infinite) we have demonstrable evidences of the existence of a God. The attributes ascribed to God are: First, that He is a Spirit, and that as a Spirit He is invisible, Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent; and hence man in the likeness of God represent there attributes, in degree.

Man is a spiritual being, and as such the real man who smiles and weeps, sympathizes in sorrow, rejoices in the prosperity of his fellowman, and has the power to will and act, is also invisible. I know that we are wont to recognize mankind by their physical form; hence if after listening to me to-night and gazing upon my body, you were asked in the future if you had ever seen W. Seymour, you would at once answer yes; and yet the man who is doing the talking is as invisible as God Himself. Hence every request we make of one another, every command or threat we may determine, is a direct appeal to the invisible and spiritual within. So true is this position that no one would think of asking a favor of, or inflicting punishment upon the body when the spirit has taken its flight; although the body (or physical form) is all that the external senses has ever been able to take cognizance of. Next to a man being a spirit and, consequently invisible; he is omnipresent, that is, so far as we can understand the relation of body and spirit; beholding man as a dual being (that is to say), having both body and spirit, we behold in him an epitome of nature; hence his physical is governed by the laws of chemistry, and in its relation to the physical universe, is of itself a miniture world. His spiritual nature is governed by the laws of psychology, and in its relation to the body (or little world of matter), is in degree and essence a miniture God; hence whatever be the component parts, or nature of the spirit, its presence permeate every atom of the physical body, so

that not the slightest injury is done to any part, without the consciousness of the Spirit; hence the omnipresence of the spirit of man to this little world, (the body) may readily be conceived and admitted. Again, taking another view of man's existence, we may learn something more concerning the existence of God. We have said that another attribute ascribed to God is that of omniscience; and if we but carefully consider the powers of man's mentality and its mode of operation we shall also find that even in this there is a striking similarity so far as the finite can represent the infinite; in all the mechanical inventions, and devices of man for the well-being of society; there is a projection of consciousness so as to behold the end from the beginning, (hence his foreknowledge). But there is still another attribute in man that represents the infinite in degree, and that is his intellectual power, in the relation between body and spirit, there seems to be no limit to the power of man's intellect; the body seems to respond involuntarily to almost every condition of the mind, which clearly shows the omnipotent power of the spirit over the body, or mind over matter. Now apply this method of reasoning to nature, and methinks that every rational mind will conclude that all these attributes which are found in man, are clearly seen to exist in an infinite degree, in that First Great Cause which must lie back of all; but whose presence and power is manifested through all the operations of a universe. Hence Jesus manifesting these attributes in a higher degree than man had ever

done: and showing more of the Divine likeness than the world had ever witnessed before; He came in His own person, to show us God, as well as to bring life and immortality to light. Hence His answer to His disciples: "He that has seen Me has seen the Father, I and My Father are one." But again turning from the universe within to the universe without, and from man to the voice of existing objects; they will testify to the being of a God and their qualities will paint his character and delineate his perfections. For the superiority of the effect to the cause being admitted, we are prepared to adduce evidences from this point most convincing; unless you make a daring plunge into darkness more dense than Atheism, and denying the reality of the existence of all things, contend that the universe is a mere phantom, a dreamy vacuity. But with such an one I have no argument; he is but a vapor or a dream on his own testimony. Such an one must be allowed to enjoy the bliss of being nothing, till hunger, thirst, sickness, or some other evil shall arouse him to the fact that he is something. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. For the invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

But advancing a step further in our argument, we

come to His Creative Energy; we presume that every man perceives that he could not have made himself; for to assume the position of self production would be to assume that he did and did not exist at the same time; he did exist in order to make himself, he did not exist in order that he might be made. Hence the one position contradicts the other. It follows then that man must have been originated by one sole cause, or by various causes; but the unity of design and agreement of parts through his entire physical structure, sufficiently proves that he cannot be the effect of many different causes. Thus the conclusion to which we must logically come, is that how far back so ever we may place the event of man's creation, he is still the effect of one great cause. This Creator, or originating essence must be himself, either created or eternal. If created, he must have originated himself or have been produced by a pre-existing cause; but self-production we have logically conceded to be impossible, as it implies a contradiction, therefore through the logical deductions of Reason, we are driven to accept by faith, the evidences of a God, whose nature and being, we cannot understand. And though from our reasonings we might infer that there be other causes back of that which has created this Universe, the fact of the existence of this and the divine harmony and providences, expressed in all the operations of nature, call for and demands our gratitude and admiration of the wisdom, power and goodness of the Being we now call God, independent of

what may be the nature of His existence, whether Himself eternal or created ; just as we would admire the skill of the physician who administers to the conditions of health, without stopping to ask by what means he first acquired his knowledge or his skill. But the harmony of motion and proportion of parts reigning throughout nature are decisive evidences against the theory of production by various causes. If man was produced by one cause, and the earth by another, how does it occur that the water and vegetation of the earth are just adapted to satisfy the hunger and thirst of man ? If the body of man was made by one cause and the sun by another, how does it come to pass that the light is adapted to the eye, and the eye to the light, and that too on philosophical principles. If one cause produced the atmosphere and another my lungs, how does it happen that the air is adapted to inflate my lungs, and my lungs to receive the atmosphere, for the important purpose of preserving life. This wonderful adaptation of parts to each other may be traced from the foundation stone to the last touch of God's pencil upon the temple of the Universe. Think again, of the grandeur of the heavens and of the harmony of the spheres ; the solar system, and system after system like a complex assemblage of wheels turning upon their centres and sweeping through space. We are sometimes astonished to see the locomotive with power to draw after it a dozen coaches moving along at the rate of from forty to fifty miles an hour, laden with passengers or freight, and

although we never saw the inventor, we are convinced of his existence, and we admire his skill; and shall we not believe in the existence and admire the skill and intelligence of the inventor of the engine or car of our Earth, which moves through space at the rate of about sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, laden with oceans, cities, forests and about ten hundred millions of passengers; and mark you, there is no tremulous jars from friction or contact of parts, no collisions or accidents, no wearing out of machinery or breaking of wheels, but all moves on harmoniously from age to age. Again we praise the sculptor who makes out of a block of marble the exact figure of a man, or the artist who is enabled to paint on canvas the finer shades and blendings, tints and hues of the setting sun's reflecting rays upon the azure of the sky, or the beautiful blossoms in the month of May, the verdure of the Sward, the beauty of a Rose or the grandeur and beauty of the hillside or the Forest; and though you may never have seen the artist; his work proves his existence and his skill; but when we consider that these are but copies, and that out of the same material the original has been produced, shall we fail to recognize the existence of that great divine Artist, who has not merely given expression to form, but has endowed it with power to move and grow, and even to reproduce itself? Is there no evidence of Divinity there? Does the cold, lifeless piece of Statuary demonstrate the intelligence of its maker or formulator, whilst the active, living man

displays only the odd friskings of nature or senseless workings of matter? But again we come to another point of our argument, viz: The divine inspiration of the scriptures. This part of our subject we purpose to explain by what is termed the philosophy of Psychology. It is a settled fact among Mental Scientists that mind communicates with mind oftentimes without the use of the external senses; hence we may call it this evening, Mental Telegraphy, or, as it is generally known, Clairvoyance. This phenomenon I have often experienced in the practice of Mesmerism, where the subject controlled has given expression to my ideas without my ever speaking a word or making use of any sign that would convey an impression through the use of any of the external senses. Practical demonstrations of the truth of this phenomenon may be observed by almost all people in every-day life. How frequently has it been the experience of persons to be conversing about some absent one, who suddenly make their appearance in the midst of the conversationalists. The philosophy of this, as it appears to me is, that every mind is a battery, and observing the conditions of physical telegraphy, we may learn the conditions of the mental; for the natural law of communication is the same, whether found in the mineral, vegetable, animal or spiritual kingdom, and like the nature and existence of the great Divine law giver, it is unchangeable. Hence if we would observe the phenomenon we must obey the law, and comply with the conditions. In physical or mental

telegraphy it is not enough that we have the different batteries, but that the line of communication be established, and then the conditions of the active and passive must be observed, so that an impression may be made upon the passive; as two positives always repel each other. Thus, in order that an idea be received by the consciousness of an individual; whether through the use of the external senses or independent, the mind of the person who is to receive the impression must be in a passive state; then through the atmosphere (which we believe is the connecting link) which connects the mentality of mankind and through which the animation of the physical is brought about, the positive conditions of the mind of the first person is communicated to the second as the positive condition of one galvanic battery is communicated through the galvanic wire, and is impressed upon the passive or negative battery on the other end of the line. Now if this be the true method of communication, and experience has demonstrated its truth again and again; then we think we have the key which will effectually unlock the truth of the Scriptures, and allow us to pass quietly into a scientific knowledge of the methods of Divine inspiration; which no Atheist or Agnostic can overthrow without effectually denying the entire phenomenon of mind in all its operations and active manifestations; for if it be possible (and such it is) that one mind can communicate to another through the active and passive conditions, independent of the use of the external senses, then whatever be the thoughts

of the mind of the active, they may be impressed upon the mind of the passive. This then being so, the communications of thought are not necessarily confined to the *experience* of the first person or operator, but may enter into his *designs* and *purposes*.

Thus, to illustrate, we will suppose a mechanic or inventor designs to build a machine to do a certain kind of work; before he commences operation he has constructed the machine in his mind, and can estimate the time it will take to build it materially. And having constructed the machine mentally, and beholding it in his imaginations, the designer is enabled to impress the ideas upon the mentality of the second person, as much so as if the machine was in actual physical operation; and if you will apply this mode of reasoning to the infinite, you will see the possibility of Divine Inspiration; for if the inventor of a machine or the designer of a purpose can see the end from the beginning in his mind before he has constructed his plans physically, or executed his purposes; then it follows that the Infinite Mind who has constructed a universe, not only seeing the end from the beginning, but knowing the time it will take according to the law of development which He has established; knew at what periods certain events would take place, both in the physical and moral world; and hence by the same established law of communion, (which is the result of His own devising, for the harmony and regulation of a universe,) God could inspire the minds of men to foretell events of which the Prophets had no con-

ception; but which the developments of the future have confirmed to be Divine truths. Thus, upon the claims of the philosophy of mental science, we are prepared to believe not only what has been revealed to us in the Scriptures, but also the prophecies which pertain to the future. And now having given you a brief view of the philosophy of psychology, and shown, we think, conclusively the rationality of a belief in Divine Inspiration, we come to the last part of our subject, namely: that of the "*Efficacy of Prayer*." To pray to God, the Atheists consider, as being the height of folly; for they will tell us that if there be a God (which they deny,) He must be allwise, and being allwise He knows what we need before we ask him; therefore, it is foolish on our part to attempt to tell God what He already knows. Again, they will tell us that being allwise, knowing our necessities, and having all power, (which if He is infinite He must possess), "If He is a good God, He would supply our needs before we ask Him." And because such seem not to be the dispensation of God's providence, or the methods of His operations concerning us; it proves there is no God to answer prayer, or if a God, then He is unjust and unmerciful. But when we take into consideration the positive and negative, or active and passive conditions of mind; and that conditions always govern effects. We learn this truth that in order to produce a psychological impression, there must be a disposition to receive, (or what we term the receptive condition on the part of the person to be im-

pressed); or otherwise (from the fact that two positives repel each other) the influence brought to bear upon the person to be psychologized, must be arbitrary; which would at once destroy the *freedom of will* on the part of the person psychologized. Now apply this method of reasoning to the philosophy of prayer, and we shall not only understand the conditions necessary to receive an answer, but the importance of complying with the conditions; and the natural results which must follow according to the great law of psychology, which God has established for the dispensations of his will, and the manifestations of his providences; guiding and controlling all those who confidently put their trust in Him, and ask for strength and guidance in all the practical affairs of life. The line of communication being established between us and God, when in sincerity we bow ourselves in humble submission to His will, expecting an answer to our petitions, (and yet at the same time holding ourselves in readiness to be inspired by his wisdom, although it may differ from what in our weakness or ignorance we may desire), we place ourselves in sympathy with the Divine mind by natural laws, as we do when we submit ourselves to be controlled by the mind of one another. And although God may desire to lead us unto the paths of virtue and holiness, by the same great law of psychology, so long as our minds are active and our attention is riveted upon the cares of the world, and we are devising plans for the accomplishment of our own purposes; though our intentions may

be ever so good, the positive conditions of our own minds, away from God, repels the influence of the Divine spirit as we repel one another. And hence we isolate ourselves from God, and so long as we remain in such a positive state, we are living without God so far as the direct influence of His spirit is concerned. Taking this view of the philosophy and efficacy of prayer, we can readily perceive why the Atheist who denies the existence of God, and the Agnostic who claims to have no knowledge of His Divine existence do not receive the evidence of His spirit bearing witness with their spirits; it is because in their positive nature they repel the influence of God's spirit, by not permitting themselves to become passive enough to receive the influence of the Divine mind. And here I discover one of the strongest "Fallacies of Atheism," for if as it must be admitted, there is a connection between cause and effect, and if all phenomenon is governed by conditions, then in order to receive the truth, the conditions governing any phenomenon should be complied with; and as it is a law of mind as well as of matter that two positives repel, where is the consistency of finding fault with God because he does not answer the desires of the hearts of those who do not put their trust in Him, nor comply with the natural conditions upon which a phenomenon of mind is produced? If we would receive an answer to our prayers, we must go to God in faith and confidence in His ability to answer; and then expecting to receive, we comply with the conditions laid

down in the New Testament by the Great Teacher, where He says: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." And now having shown the "Fallacy of Atheism" in denying the existence and creative energy of God's Divine presence, manifested through all the operations of nature, and in denying the Divine inspiration of the scriptures, and the efficacy of prayer, all of which are based upon the immutability of natural laws. I trust that every heart and mind before me to-night, who already believe in these things, may be made stronger in their faith. And that those who do not believe will see the importance and consistency of yielding to the same conditions of faith in God that is required by the same great law of mind in yielding to the persuasions and control of the minds of their fellow men, until they shall learn the truths of Divine inspiration, and the efficacy of prayer, from actual experience. Thanking you for the interest you have shown in this discourse, and trusting that the arguments used may have its desired effect, I leave the subject with you.



